4.Exploring the Enigma of Ravana and His World.

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Kumbhakarna's Solemn Warning to Ravana:
On the first day of the war, as Ravanan prepared to lead his troops into battle, Kumbhakarna sensed the impending doom of Ravana and Lanka. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, he resolved to shoulder the burden of war for his brother. Before the war, Kumbhakarna solemnly advised Ravana that if he himself were to fall in battle, no one else should follow him to the battlefield.. Despite his valiant efforts, Kumbhakarna fell in battle at the hands of Rama's soldiers. This loss only fueled Ravana's anger, particularly when Lakshmana insulted his sister shurphakai further by dismissing food offerings. Kumbhakarna's death intensified Ravana's thirst for vengeance against Rama.

The Legendary Tale of Indrajeet: Son of Ravana
The narrative delves into the life of Indrajeet, Ravana's eldest son, originally named Meghanathan due to the stormy weather during his birth. He displayed remarkable courage from a young age, playing fearlessly with lions, a concern that was brought to Kumbhakarna's attention. However, Indrajeet's playful antics caused no harm, as he skillfully handled the lions without causing injury to anyone. Despite concerns raised by Kumbhakarna, Ravana dismissed them, recognizing his son's spirited nature as typical childhood behavior. Indrajeet was blessed by Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu further enhancing his prowess. In a significant encounter, he defeated Indra and secured his release from Earth with a condition imposed by Brahma. Indrajeet's love story with

shulochana added a tender dimension to his character. Prior to the war, fueled by vengeance for his fallen brother and personal vendetta against Hanuman, Indrajeet engaged in a fierce battle with Hanuman. Despite Hanuman's capture and subsequent trial, his defiance led to a fiery display of power that engulfed Lanka. This event fueled Indrajeet's determination to confront Rama and Lakshmana, marking his first triumph in the impending conflict.

During the war, both Rama and Lakshmana sustained severe injuries, prompting Hanuman to fetch the celestial herb from the Siranjeevi hills to heal Lakshmana. The following day, as they prepared to return to the battlefield. Seizing this opportunity, indrajit devised a deceitful ploy by placing a fake head of Sita on the battlefield, causing Rama and Lakshmana to believe she had been killed. Overcome with grief, they retreated. In this scenario, Vibhishana, Ravana's brother, approached Lakshmana and Raman conveyed that their family did not resort to assassinating foes from behind, alluding to Rama's defeat of Vali. Moreover, he emphasized that their family did not harbor ill intentions towards women, specifically referencing Lakshmana's actions towards Shurpanakha.

Indrajeet's Fate: A Turning Point in the War

He undergoes a yagam ritual to enhance his strength and ensure victory in subsequent conflicts. Vibhishana disclosed this secret to Rama and Lakshmana. When the next day yagam was about to conclude, Lakshmana intervened, understanding that whoever halts the ritual would be the one to defeat Indrajeet. Following this interruption, Lakshmana informed Rama about his role in stopping the yagam, sealing Indrajeet's fate. Aware of his impending death due to a divine decree from Brahma, Indrajeet requested to face Lakshmana in battle and meet his end at his hands. It was the first time he learned about Sita, and to prevent the war, he approached Ravana, knowing he was destined to die in the conflict. Reluctant to face the battlefield himself, he urged his father to attend the war, offering to take his place if needed. Upon understanding that his father wouldn't relent, he made a solemn request that if he were to fall, no one else should continue the fight, akin to Kumbakarna's resolve on behalf of Ravana before his death. In the ensuing confrontation, despite initial setbacks, Rama and Lakshmana gained the upper hand. However, in a desperate move, lakshmana aimed an arrow at Indrajeet, severing his head. Upon discovering his son's demise, Ravana was deeply aggrieved and took Indrajeet's body to perform the final rites, marking the end of his life shulochana his wife died with him in sati.

The Final Battle: Rama vs. Ravana – A Clash of Titans

Now it's time for the ultimate showdown as Ravanan prepares to face Rama. Having lost his brother, son, and daughter-in-law, insulted his sister, and with nothing left but his resolve, Ravana marches onto the battlefield with unwavering determination. Both warriors charge at each other with full force, ready to settle the score once and for all. Amidst the chaos, If Sita witnessed Rama's valor and strategy on the battlefield, she might have been even more enamored by his qualities as a skilled warrior. While Rama is renowned for his virtues as a loving husband and melodious singer, his prowess in

warfare would have added another layer of admiration to his character, making him appear as graceful and captivating as any other handsome and gallant hero. Despite Ravana's taunts, Rama remains steadfast, acknowledging him as a worthy adversary. Sensing his impending demise in the battle, Ravana predicts that his name will forever be associated with Rama's triumphs. Despite inflicting severe wounds on Ravana, Rama is bewildered as the demon king's injuries miraculously heal. Determined to end the conflict, Rama unleashes the Brahmastra, a weapon crafted specifically for Ravana's defeat. Though possessing the power to unleash the Brahmastra himself, Ravana refrains from doing so, mindful of its catastrophic potential. As the Brahmastra pierces through Ravana's body, he falls from his chariot, his final thoughts consumed by memories of his sister Shurpanakha and wife Mandodari.

When Mandodari approached Ravana and speculated that Surpanakha might have incited Lakshmana to sever Shurpanakha's nose, thereby instigating the war, she lamented her son's loss and now faced the prospect of losing her husband. Though fate seemed inevitable, she expressed her grief to Ravana. However, the truth behind the entire conflict lay in Surpanakha's vendetta, driven by her desire for revenge after Ravana killed her husband unknowingly. Despite being aware of this, Surpanakha sought to avenge her husband's death by manipulating Rama as a pawn in her scheme. Vibhishana later disclosed this truth on the battlefield, revealing the cunning plot orchestrated by Surpanakha and underscoring the true motives behind the war.

Ravana's Final Days and Last Teachings:
As Ravana lay on his deathbed, Rama sent Lakshmana to seek teachings on life, politics, and ruling a kingdom. Lakshmana was puzzled why they should seek knowledge from Ravanan, considering Ravana was known as a great warrior and king. Rama explained that despite Ravana's prowess, his opposition to the gods indicated his true worrier. Recognizing this, Lakshmana approached Ravana for his teachings. However, Ravana admonished Lakshmana for not showing proper respect before seeking knowledge. Feeling angered, Lakshmana returned to Rama, who instructed him on the importance of humility and respect. Lakshmana then approached Ravana again, this time showing humility, and Ravana agreed to impart his wisdom. Despite his own downfall caused by Rama and Lakshmana, Ravana selflessly shared his knowledge, demonstrating his commitment to teaching.

Ravana's Three Life Teachings to Lakshmana:

- Promptness in good deeds: Ravana advised Lakshmana to never delay in doing good deeds, as they bring virtue and positivity. Conversely, he suggested delaying harmful actions until one's conscience is satisfied.
- Never underestimate enemies: Ravana cautioned against underestimating adversaries, citing his own mistake of underestimating Hanuman's capabilities. He emphasized the importance of acknowledging and respecting the strengths of opponents.

- Keep secrets guarded: Ravana stressed the importance of keeping secrets confidential, as divulging them can lead to one's downfall. He cited his own experience of sharing secrets with Surpanakha, which ultimately led to his defeat.

Ravana's Political Teachings to Lakshmanan:

- Loyalty to Family and Allies: Ravana emphasized the importance of staying loyal to family, friends, and relatives, as they are aware of one's secrets and vulnerabilities. He illustrated this with examples of betrayal towards his son Indrajeet and sharing secrets with Rama and Lakshmana by Vibhishan.
- Humility in Victory: Ravana warned against overestimating one's capabilities and assuming victory in every situation. He acknowledged his own downfall from a position of power due to arrogance, cautioning against letting ego cloud judgment.
- Accepting Constructive Criticism: Ravana advised against surrounding oneself only with praise and flattery, urging instead to value those who offer constructive criticism. He cited examples of individuals like Indrajeet, Kumbhakarna, and Mandodari, who provided valuable insights during crucial moments.
- Skepticism towards Astrology: Ravana cautioned against relying too heavily on astrological predictions, highlighting the unpredictability of planetary influences. He reflected on Indrajeet's fate, whose wealth couldn't protect him from a predetermined lifespan.

Afterward, Lakshmana questioned Rama about the credibility of receiving teachings from Ravana, given their adversarial relationship. Rama responded by highlighting Ravana's stature as a great guru, emphasizing the importance of seeking knowledge without prejudice and evaluating the source's wisdom rather than personal feelings. Rama acknowledged that even adversaries possess admirable qualities, and Ravana's wisdom could offer valuable lessons, hence the decision to send Lakshmana to him for guidance.

Ravana's Final Moments:

In Ravanan's final moments, Mandodari whispered the secret names they had shared during their marriage into his ears. As he heard those words, Ravanan's life came to an end.

What truly impressed me was when doubts arose about Sita's purity, and Rama asked her to emerge unharmed from the fire. It showcased Sita's purity, but what's noteworthy is that it also established Ravana's dignity in the process.

"Sita's emergence unharmed from the fire not only showcased her purity but also established RAVANESHWARAN dignity."

ராவணன் என்றவன் சிறந்தவன் என்று கூறும் கவிதைகள்...